

Michigan HBPA President, George Kutlenios
Testimony Before the House Regulatory Reform Committee
HB 4670
Oct. 14, 2015

Good Afternoon Chairman Franz and members of the committee. My name is George Kutlenios and I am President of the Michigan Horseman's Benevolent and Protective Association (HBPA), owners and trainers of Michigan Thoroughbred Race Horses.

In June of 2014, Michigan Thoroughbreds returned to the metro-Detroit area and we have been overwhelmed by the support we have received by Thoroughbred racing fans. On opening day at Hazel Park Raceway, we had over 10,000 people in attendance and for the past two years, our attendance for live racing has consistently averaged over 6,000 people.

Horse racing became the first legalized form of gaming in Michigan in 1934 and currently we are operating under the 1995 Horse Racing Act. Unfortunately, the success that we have experienced over the past two years has magnified the inadequacies of our 20 year old Act. As the legislative session continues we hope to work with the legislature on ways to modernize this law so that Michigan racing can continue to be an important component to Michigan's overall agricultural industry.

We appreciate Rep. Kosowski and this committee in bringing HB 4670 forward as a way to explore increasing opportunities to bring Thoroughbred racing to additional venues.

As you consider this legislation we would recommend some changes to the bill as introduced. For example, the legislation does not address purse pool funding for Michigan racing. We would recommend that the legislation include language that would create a relationship between any venue wishing to simulcast Thoroughbred racing and a licensed Michigan track to ensure that sustainability and quality of Michigan Thoroughbred racing, and the resulting support to the state's agricultural industry, can continue.

Thank you for your time and I will be happy to answer any questions committee members may have.

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